



What is an Adoption Support agreement?

An Adoption Support agreement is a contract and is binding on both the adoptive parents and DSHS. Each agreement is negotiated separately based on the special needs of the child and the adoptive family's circumstances.

An Adoption Support Agreement must be signed before the adoption is finalized.

If circumstances change, families may make a request to the Adoption Support Program Manager for review.

Under what circumstances would the Adoption Support agreement end?

The Adoption Support agreement ends when:

- The child reaches age 18 except if the child is still in high school and continues to be financially dependent on the adoptive parents;
- The adoptive parent is no longer legally or financially responsible for the child;

Check with your Adoption Support Program Manager for any other events which may end the Adoption Support agreement.

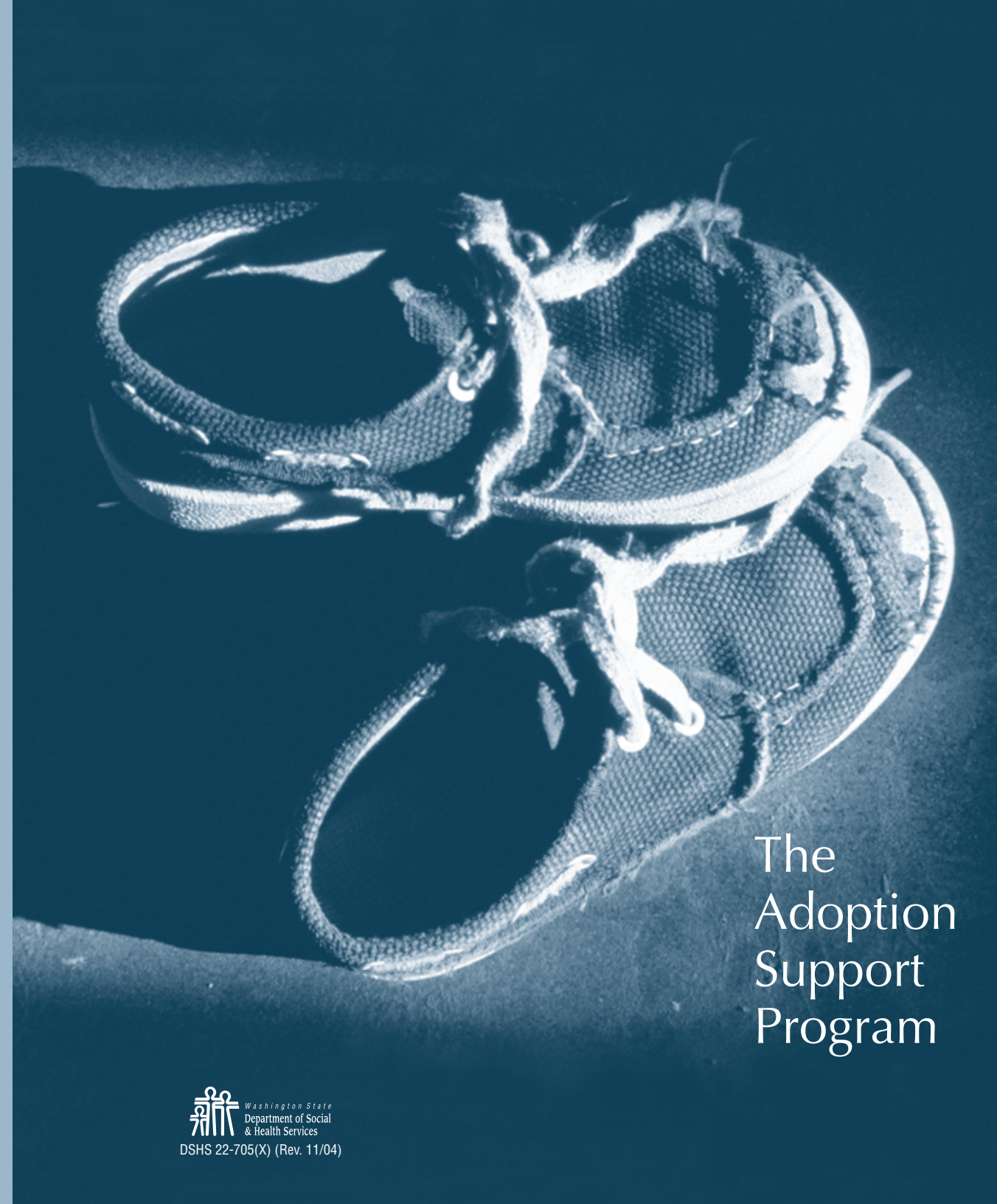
What if I don't agree with the decision made by DSHS?

Should a family disagree with a decision by the Adoption Support Program which changes their agreement or denies a program covered service, they should try to resolve it with the Adoption Support Program Manager. If it cannot be resolved, they may request a Fair Hearing. The Adoption Support Program Manager can tell you how to request a Fair Hearing.

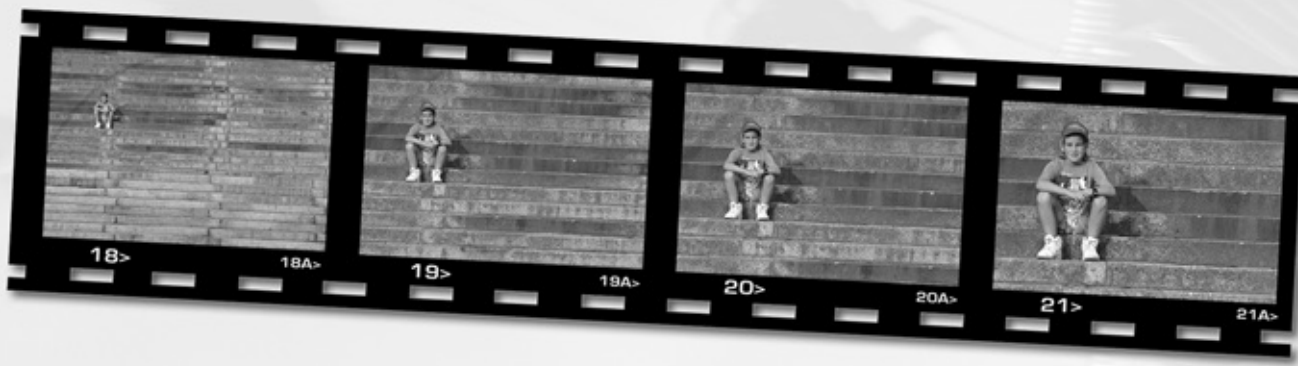
The Family and Children's Ombudsman is an independent office within the Governor's Office that can help if you have a complaint about a situation involving foster care or adoption. You can call the Children's Ombudsman at 1-800-571-7321.

How can I find out more about Adoption Support?

To find out more about Adoption Support, call the local Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Children and Family Services in your area or e-mail the Adoption Program Manager: <mailto:apm@dshs.wa.gov>



The
Adoption
Support
Program



What is the Adoption Support Program?

The Adoption Support Program provides after-adoption services for qualified children based on state and federal regulations. It is not a continuation of the foster care program.

What is the purpose of the Adoption Support Program?

The purpose of the Adoption Support Program is to make adoptions possible for children who are legally free but because of special circumstances might otherwise not be adopted. Children are primarily in the legal custody of the Department of Social and Health Services, (DSHS).

What services are available through the Adoption Support Program?

Available services may include the following:

- **Medical and Dental Services** – as provided by the state’s Medicaid program. If the child is covered by the parent’s private insurance, that insurance must be used first. Medicaid can then be billed for any remaining cost up to the maximum allowable Medicaid rate;
- **Pre-authorized counseling** costs at program rates;
- **Training opportunities** for the adoptive parent;
- **A monthly cash subsidy payment** up to the maximum amount the child would receive if the child were in a foster family home;
- **Reimbursement for one time expenses incurred by the adoptive parent in finalizing the adoption** through the state’s program.

Who qualifies for Adoption Support?

To be eligible for Adoption Support, the department must have made a determination that adoption is in the child’s best interest. The child must:

1. Be less than eighteen years of age when the department and the adoptive parent sign the adoption support agreement;
2. Be legally free (birth parents rights have been terminated);
3. Have “special needs” (see explanation below); and
4. Meet at least one of the following requirements:
 - a) Be in state funded foster care (or eligible for and likely to be placed in foster care); or
 - b) Is eligible for federally funded adoption assistance

What are “special needs”?

To be considered a child with “special needs” each of the following statements must be true:

1. One or more of the following factors or conditions must exist:

- a) The child is of a minority ethnic background;
- b) The child is six years of age or older at the time of application for Adoption Support;
- c) The child is a member of a sibling group of three or more or of a sibling group in which one or more siblings meet the definition of special needs;
- d) The child is diagnosed with a physical, mental, developmental, cognitive or emotional disability; or
- e) The child is at risk for a diagnosis of a physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, or emotional disability due to prenatal exposure to toxins, a history of serious abuse or neglect, or genetic history.

2. The state has determined that the child cannot or should not be returned to parent’s home; and

3. A reasonable but unsuccessful effort was made to place the child for adoption without Adoption Support.

Other unique conditions may exist in which a child would qualify. Contact your social worker for more information. Almost every child in the state’s Foster Care program qualifies for Adoption Support.

How is application made to the Adoption Support Program?

Contact your social worker to get more information or assistance with applying to the Adoption Support Program. The application is reviewed by the Adoption Support Program Manager. An Adoption Support agreement is issued for a child who qualifies.